

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

SUBJECT

Reformatory Labor Camp at VORKUTA.

AREA REPORTED ON

VORKUTA; USSR

FROM (Agency)

7050th AISW (USAF)

DATE OF REPORT

2-7-54

DATE OF INFORMATION

Dec 50 - Jun 53

EVALUATION

E-6

PREPARED BY (Officer)

EDWARD E LUNDAY, Lt Col, USAF

SOURCE

226343

REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable)

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclosures at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 112-Port 11.)

I. PREAMBLE:

SOURCE, interned from Dec 50 - Jun 53 in Reformatory Labor Camp # 5, belonging to coal mine # 40, at VORKUTA (6730N-6403E). Worked from Dec 50 - Feb 51 as general laborer within the camp; was sick from Feb 51 - Jun 53 and stayed in the camp hospital during entire time, working as clerk and interpreter. Observations made while walking through camp and hospital. Strictly guarded. Never outside camp. Info firsthand, unless stated otherwise.

II. REFORMATORY LABOR CAMP # 5 AT VORKUTA:

Entire strength of camp: 3,000 internees, 40% Ukrainians, 10% Germans (50% PWs, 50% civilians, arrested in East Berlin or East Zone of Germany), 20% citizens of former Baltic countries, 50 Soviet Jews, 2 British and 3 Americans, rest of internees from various Asiatic parts of the USSR. Actual Russians were a minority of about 100 persons, many of them former emigrants who had left the USSR after the Oct Revolution in 1917 and had been arrested in Germany after WW II. Majority of internees consisted of political prisoners, criminals (so-called BLATNOIS) only in key-positions as 'brigadiers' and kitchen personnel. The BLATNOIS did not work, cooperated with the MVD guard personnel and forced all other internees to obey to their orders. Many of the BLATNOIS were homosexual, they forced younger internees to participate in homosexual excesses. Complaints were useless and even dangerous because the BLATNOIS knocked down those persons sooner or later and hurt some of them severely so that they had to be transferred into the hospital.

Among the 2 British prisoners there was one person who was said to be a Jew. Name unknown. About 45 years old. 160 cm tall, slender. Black hair (cut off) pale thin face. Wore glasses. Spoke Russian. SOURCE talked several times with him. No info on origin. Was in camp already when SOURCE arrived. Transferred in late 52 to unknown destination. No further details. The other British internee was a former British soldier, 30 years old, name unknown, 175 cm tall, slender. Pale face, black hair (cut off). No further details since SOURCE never spoke to him. Last work site of this internee was in the camp laundry. There were rumors that this man had been captured in VLADIVOSTOK (4307N-13154E) no details.

Description of the three American internees: SOURCE met 1 of the Americans already in BERLIN on the transport from BERLIN to VORKUTA. He had also been in the prison BERLIN-LICHTENBERG. Name unknown, first name WILLIAM. 30 years old. 180 cm tall, stout. Black hair (cut off later), black eyes, fresh reddish complexion. Spoke some Russian. Told SOURCE his history during the transport. He

INCL5.

DISTRIBUTION BY ORIGINATOR

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)

REPORT NO.

7050th AISW (USAFE)

59A-B-2762B

PAGE

6

OF 7

PAGES

was born in the States, place unknown, probably in Eastern parts of the US. His parents were Ukrainians from KOBRIN (5213N-2421E) and had emigrated to the States, year unknown. Parents owned a little restaurant in the States. He was not married. He was stationed in BERLIN as soldier of the American occupation forces, no info on unit or rank. In late 49, he became acquainted with a civilian probably a German who spoke some Russian. They visited a restaurant, he got drunk and fell asleep. When he woke up again he found himself in a cell of the prison BERLIN-LICHTENBERG. His uniform had been taken away in the meantime, and he wore a civilian suit. It was a grey suit and a civilian hat (German shape) which he still wore during the transport. In the prison he was tried and sentenced to 20 years of forced labor because of espionage. Before the transport to VORKUTA started this American received 2 leather dressing cases from the Russians with several suits, good underwear, shoes and even pyjamas. During the transport the American was treated better than the other prisoners. Each time he asked the Soviet guard soldiers for tobacco he got some; they even rolled him the cigarettes after they found out that he was unable to do. Each time the American smoked only a few draws and then gave the cigarette to the other inmates of his RR coach. During the transport he was in a good mood and very optimistic, convinced that he was only victim of a mistake of the Soviet justice court, and that he would be released very soon. After the arrival at VORKUTA this American remained together with SOURCE in the same barrack. During the 1st night his 2 leather cases were stolen. Though he reported to the administration the next morning, he never got them back. After he had received the usual clothing of all other VORKUTA prisoners (padded jackets and trousers and felt shoes) he remained in a very desperate mood. He worked as a miner in coal mine # 40. In the course of time SOURCE lost the contact to this American since SOURCE never worked outside the camp. He heard from fellow internees that this American had been transferred into another unknown camp in the beginning of 52. When SOURCE was repatriated in Jun 53 he heard from fellow internees that this American was still in the area.

The 2nd American was already in camp # 5 when SOURCE arrived. About 50 years old, name unknown. 170 cm tall, slender. Grey hair (cut off). Pale friendly face. Came from California, no further details. Came to USSR before the beginning of WW II, probably as a friend of Communism as SOURCE assumed from some remarks of this man. Spoke Russian rather fluently. Had been active Communist during WW II and had been soldier in the Red Army as SOURCE believed to recall. Had lost his credit, reason unknown, and was sentenced to forced labor. Did not work as a miner, but kept an easier post in the administration. Tried several times to get into contact with his compatriote, but the first-described American remained rather reserved and frosty towards him. This 2nd American was transferred in early 52 to another unknown camp.

SOURCE did not know the 3rd American personally. He saw him only a few times and believed he was 30 years old. Small, stout. SOURCE knew that he worked in coal mine # 40 as electrician. Still in this camp when SOURCE was repatriated.

All 50 Soviet Jews were former prominent citizens, many of them professors, teachers and authors. SOURCE knew some of them personally. One of them told SOURCE the following history: In 47 the USSR had acknowledged the new State of Israel. Israel then sent a woman as ambassador to MOSKVA (5545N-3737E). Many prominent Soviet Jews who feared the latent anti-semitism among the Soviet population, had contacted the new Israel ambassador and had made inquiries about the possibilities of an emigration to Israel. The immigration was possible and even wanted by the new state of Israel according to the info of the Israel embassy at MOSKVA. Now the Soviet Jews started to enlist those persons who applied for a soon emigration to Israel. In 48 a Jew in Israel had thrown a bomb into bldg of the Soviet Embassy at the Israel capital. As a consequence the public opinion in the USSR changed entirely and became very hostile towards Israel. Suddenly the initiators of the emigration list were suspected to be traitors of the country. The leading Jews of the emigration group (mostly members of the Communist

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)

REPORT NO.

7050th AISW (USAF)

59A-B-2762B

PAGE

7

OF

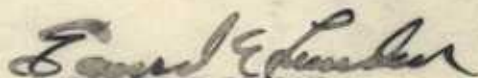
7

PAGES

intelligentsia) were arrested and sent to various labor camps. 50 of these Jews were in SOURCE's camp at VORKUTA. They all did an easier type of work, nobody worked underground as a miner. SOURCE only recalled details of 1 of these Jews. First name "MORDUCHAI", family name unknown. 56 years old, married; 180 cm tall. Grey hair (cut off). Had lived in a small town near KIYEV (5028N-3031E). Was general book-keeper of an industrial installation, no details. In 41, the installation was evacuated because of the advance of the German Army. He left the town together with his firm, whereas his family and all his relatives remained there. After WW II he returned and found that his family and all relatives had been evacuated by the Germans, very probably to a camp where they had been killed, since he never found a trace of them. Being still under impression of a all-European antisemitism he too applied for a soon emigration to Israel. In 48 he was arrested and sentenced because of anti-Soviet attitude and membership to an anti-Soviet organization. Sentence was: 10 years of forced labor. Another Jew, ISAAC EDELMAN, 55 years old, Lt of the Red Army, had been in Germany from 45-47. Had been responsible for the re-organization of the German printing presses and publishing houses in the area of LEIPZIG (5118N-1220E). He occupied a very important position, normally held by a major. In 47 he too applied for an emigration to Israel, after the possibilities were reported to him from friends at MOSKVA. In 48 he was called back to MOSKVA, and soon after his arrival he was arrested.

In this camp there were 12 male physicians for the medical supervision of the internees, mostly Russians and a few Lithuanians; Among the Russians there was a very well known physician, Professor PIETROV from MOSKVA. All physicians were internees too. Professor PIETROV was a surgeon, his last work site was at the hospital of the MOSKVA university. About 55 years old. No info on reason of imprisonment. He had been sentenced in 1935 already to 20 years of interment, was sure that he would be released in 55. He was an excellent physician with a human character. Though the physicians were told to acknowledge only 10% of the sick internees as really being sick, he was always very generous and tried to be fair to every sick prisoner. He performed numerous successful operations though his medical equipment was primitive. SOURCE knew him personally and heard that his sentence was discriminating insofar as he could not return to MOSKVA. He intended to settle down in the VORKUTA area and to work as a physician in the town hospital. SOURCE observed that he received regularly medical literature, one of the paper was called "MEDIZINSKA RABOTNIK".

Among the other internees there was a professor of mathematics from the university of TOMSK (5629N-8459E), born at ALMA ATA (4316N-7656E), with name ALIMKHAN ABEUTOVITCH JERMEKOFF, 64 years old. He had been member of an anti-Soviet group of Usbekians and had been sentenced because of political unreliability. He was a close friend of above mentioned Professor PIETROV. He arranged very often political meetings with an anti-Soviet tendency to which many physicians and some of the before mentioned Jews were invited.



EDWARD E LUNDAK

Lt Col, USAF

Commander

7059 AISS